

A STUDY OF BOYS IN FOSTER HOMES WHO WERE  
ON PAROLE FROM A TRAINING SCHOOL

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Emphasis on treatment at a training school for delinquent boys is focused upon meeting the needs of each child that it receives. A training school functions as an educational institution which prepares young people who have failed to conform to accepted standards of conduct, for successful living in their homes and communities, or, where this is impossible, in a carefully selected foster home. Here the writer is concerned mainly with the institutional treatment and placement of the juvenile having been released from the Training School.

The New York State Training School for Boys offers such a program for boys who have encountered much difficulty in adjusting to their communities, and are committed by the Children's Courts of New York City and Orange County. The purpose of the Training School is to better prepare the boy physically and emotionally for the family and community to which he will return. The School was founded in 1932 for the study and treatment of delinquent boys between the ages of twelve and sixteen from New York City and Orange County. It is one of the two institutions founded to replace the New York House of Refuge, which was established many years ago for the care of delinquent boys of the city of New York and its vicinity. The Training School is located in the Orange County foothills of the Ramapo Mountains, four miles east of the village of Warwick, and approximately fifty miles from the city of New York. It embraces approximately seven hundred and forty acres of what was once an old colonial farm. The fields, woods, lake and the neighboring hills are a picturesque and impressive setting for the thirty red brick, tile roofed buildings which make up Warwick's physical plant. There are four recreational fields,

a swimming beach and an extensive school farm of approximately three hundred and fifty acres under cultivation which supply a large part of the food consumed at the School. An exceptional opportunity exists at Warwick for careful study and experimentation.

The specific area of treatment which the writer chose to study was the placement of boys in foster homes who were released from the New York State Training School for Boys. Early in the history of the School, the need was recognized for funds which would provide more flexibility in the aftercare planning for boys discharged under supervision. Since 1937, an annual appropriation by the State of New York has been available for foster home placement at the Training School for Boys without adequate homes. Formerly, it was expected that various community agencies would arrange placements for boys released and referred for foster home care. The Children's Aid Society initially participated in the foster home program. The Children's Aid Society paid a case worker to carry the boys referred and paid for by the Training School. The original boarding care program had the benefit of the advice of a special committee of the Welfare Council. It was through the work of this committee that the Children's Aid Society agreed to the plan of employing a home finder for Warwick cases. The chief difficulty with having private agencies undertake the actual home finding work for the institution was the fact that agencies could accept only younger children, and children who would probably do well in a boarding care situation. In December 1938, the Children's Aid Society withdrew from the project and left the burden of providing homes for the boys to the New York State Training School. The School was confronted with the problem of placing boys over fourteen years of age, as this was a pioneering venture that other placement agencies had

not attempted. The trend of foster home care at this time was restricted to younger dependent and neglected children who did not show any behavior difficulties. With the beginning of this program the Training School paid slightly more for the boys placed than the rate for dependent and neglected children that other agencies were paying.

At the time of this study, the New York Office of the Training School had one social worker who devoted full time to finding foster homes, working with the boys under commitment who were prospective foster home cases, and supervising those who had been placed in foster homes. An attempt is made to place each boy in keeping with his particular needs in terms of what the foster home has to offer.

The objective of placement is not just to provide a boy with a roof over his head, but to place him in a congenial atmosphere where he feels accepted, and where he receives all the attention, affection and guidance which ultimately should lead to a lasting satisfactory adjustment.<sup>1</sup>

These boys are placed in homes which are licensed by the State Department or the New York City Department of Health, or some other authorized agency, as proper places to receive boys.

Although the Training School has been fortunate in having a number of foster homes available over many years, the need continues to be great and new homes are constantly being sought.

#### Significance of the Study

Practically all of the boys committed to the New York State Training School have experienced a good deal of parental rejection. They may have

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<sup>1</sup>Erwin Schepses, "Organization for Treatment at The New York State Training School for Boys" (Warwick, New York, 1951), p. 44.

retaliating feelings toward their parents which may not allow them to accept any parental figures. They may cling with agonized longing to the parental relationships which have failed them, and thus, unable to take on others in place of them. They may have experienced rejection to the extent that they have no capacity for relating to others and no concept of social standards, so that they are continually in conflict with authority. However, after a period of treatment in a neutral setting, such as the Training School, many of these boys can be placed in foster homes. These boys, as all youngsters, experience the anxiety connected with going from the familiar to the unfamiliar.

This study of foster home placements of some of the boys released from the New York State Training School was chosen because the writer was interested in knowing more about this particular phase of treatment with the hope that the information may possess meaningfulness and significance to agencies and persons working with youngsters having similar problems.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the factors that were taken into consideration by the Training School in referring these twenty-nine boys to foster homes, by analyzing some of the personal, familial, cultural, and social factors inherent in the lives of the boys placed. From this study one might discern the policy, procedure and practice of the foster home program at the New York State Training School for Boys. This study should also show how some of these boys have utilized former foster home placements, and their adjustments while there and at the Training School.



### Method of Procedure

The methods used in this study were: conferences with various staff members in the agency who were familiar with the foster home program and the boys studied; a schedule on which was collected the data from case histories, and other allied data to obtain the early development of each boy and his institutional adjustment. Records at the Training School and in the aftercare department were utilized. Literature, published and unpublished, pertaining to the subject was examined.

### Scope and Limitations

This study included twenty-nine boys who were on parole from the New York State Training School and were living in foster homes. This number represents the total number of boys living in foster homes during the month of October 1952, who were on parole from the Training School. These youngsters were formerly committed to the Training School by the Children's Courts of New York City.

## CHAPTER II

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BOYS STUDIED

Foster home care for the delinquent boy who has undergone a period of treatment in a training school does not begin with placement, but with the youngster and all his experiences as far back as one can ascertain. Perhaps the most basic consideration in the utilization of foster family homes for boys who have been adjudged delinquent is the extent to which their personalities and needs are known. These can be determined only by a careful study of the life history of each boy up to the point where he is.

Primary behavior disorders in children are classified in three groups; namely, habit disturbance, conduct disturbance, and neurotic traits.<sup>1</sup> The boys in this study exhibited conduct disturbances which indicated symptomatic manifestations such as truancy, quarrelsomeness, disobedience, untruthfulness, stealing, forgery, setting fires, destructiveness, use of alcohol, use of drugs, cruelty, sex offenses and vagrancy.<sup>2</sup> Youngsters with conduct disturbances are aggressively in conflict with their environment, and their behavior may be accentuated with varying degrees of parental frustration and rejection. If the child does not obtain affection and support from parental figures to enable him to incorporate an adequate superego, defective controls result, and conflict remains between him and his restraining environment. It is evident that these youngsters were unable to harmonize their instinctual drives with the demands of their

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<sup>1</sup>Lawson G. Lowrey, Psychiatry for Social Workers (New York, 1947), p. 260.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

environment due to faulty ego development.

### Personal Characteristics

TABLE 1

#### AGE, RACE AND RELIGION OF BOYS STUDIED

Ages	Number of Boys	Negro		White	
	Total	Protestant	Catholic	Protestant	Catholic
Total	29	16	2	4	7
11	1	1	-	-	-
12	4	2	-	1	1
13	4	3	-	-	1
14	10	4	1	1	4
15	9	5	1	2	1
16	1	1	-	-	-

Table 1 reveals that of the twenty-nine boys studied, eighteen were Negroes and eleven were white. Twenty-two were born and reared in New York and seven migrated there with their families. Of the seven, two came from Philadelphia, one from Ohio, one from Alabama, one from South America, one from Haiti and one from Puerto Rico.

Over two-thirds of the group fell into the middle teen-age bracket at the time of admission as was indicated by the fact that ten of the boys were fourteen years old and nine were fifteen years old. Of the remaining ten, four were thirteen years old, four were twelve, one was sixteen and one was eleven. The fact that such a large number of boys fell into the fourteen and fifteen-year-old brackets may be indicative of increased tensions that come about with the onset of adolescence, wherein the ego and the superego are not strong enough to cope with this period. The child who has had a secure development and has good ego defenses is able to survive the storm successfully. On the other hand, the child who has

not had a secure development may be able to function adequately only as long as his defenses hold. With the breakdown of these, he finds himself in conflict with his environment and unable to accept authority. The adolescent has reached a stage in his development where socially he is expected to behave like an adult, but is not accorded the recognition and prerogatives of adult status.<sup>1</sup>

He is expected to conform to adult restrictions and mores, and yet he is allowed very few of the advantages and privileges which should accrue at maturity. His sphere of activity is circumscribed, his efforts to assert himself are suppressed, his possessions are definitely limited, his economic independence is not tolerated, his status as an adult is unrecognized, and many of the restrictions of his childhood remain in force.<sup>2</sup>

Ambivalence is also characteristic of the adolescent. Here the youngster's feelings of insecurity and the longing for, as well as the rejection of, dependency is recurrent. He seeks independence, yet is rebellious and resentful of authority. This is the recapitulation of the oedipal phase wherein the child has feelings of love and hate toward the parental figures. The adolescent feels that he is not understood by the parents, whereas formerly he felt that he was not loved. Therefore, extreme reactions are more likely to occur in youngsters who were disturbed prior to adolescence. Parents who are prepared for this unpredictable period are able to help the struggling youth to achieve a new social balance.

All of the boys in the study professed some exposure to religious teachings as reflected in twenty boys being of the Protestant faith and nine Catholics. It appeared that more Protestants had conflict in accepting authority and were in need of foster home care than Catholics.

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<sup>1</sup>Maud A. Merrill, Problems of Child Delinquency (Cambridge, 1947), p. 111.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

However, the availability of more adequate resources for Catholic boys in the community, sponsored by the Catholic Church, may be attributable to this small number. Perhaps this suggests that a child's race and religion are not only indicative of the general culture to which he has been conditioned, but also influence his future to a great extent.

#### Familial Characteristics

Of the twenty-nine boys studied, all except one were, for one reason or another, products of broken homes. Prior to admission, one boy lived with both his parents, four lived with one parent and a step-parent, and three were living with one parent. Ten boys were in foster homes and four were in institutions. Of the seven residing with relatives, two were with aunts, four with elder married siblings, and one was with his grandparents.

TABLE 2

#### MARITAL STATUS OF PARENTS

Marital Status	Number of Boys
Total	<u>29</u>
Parents Married and Living Together	<u>1</u>
Parents Never Married	<u>12</u>
Both Parents Deceased	<u>3</u>
Mother Deceased	<u>7</u>
Father Remarried	1
Father Not Remarried	3
Father's Status Unknown	3
Parents Divorced	<u>4</u>
Father Remarried	1
Mother Remarried	2
Parents Not Remarried	1
Parents Separated	<u>2</u>

Table 2 reveals the marital status of the boys' parents on admission. In twelve cases the parents were never married, which is reflective of the

high incidence of illegitimate births. In three cases both parents were deceased, and in seven cases the mother was deceased. The parents were divorced in four cases and separated in two. In only one case were both the parents married and living together.

The number of parents together is strikingly less than the number of parents separated, deceased or divorced. Hence, the majority of boys, by being deprived of one or both parents, could not have come from a very stable unit. The disorganization of a family in most cases is a threat to the physical and emotional security of a child. Family responsibilities falling upon one parent may be too heavy a load, and the children may reflect the resultant disturbance in some form of unacceptable behavior. Quite often separation of parents brings about inadequate family supervision of the children, since one parent cannot work and at the same time provide the children with proper supervision.

The absence of the father or mother may be traumatic for a child and effect his later relationships, happiness, and success if some parent substitute is not provided. The child may also lose his source of identification with the parent of the same sex while going through the oedipal stage of psychosexual development. Here, the girl becomes attached to the father and the boy to the mother, and each is helped by understanding parental figures to resolve this conflict by renouncing jealousy for the parent of the opposite sex. The parent of the same sex contributes to the natural identification by continual acceptance and facilitates the child's moving into future heterosexual relationships. The stable home not only provides a feeling of emotional security, but also stimulates and encourages the child's mental growth.

It is only natural that the home looms first and foremost among the situational factors that contribute to the moulding of the child's personality.<sup>1</sup> In a home in which parents fail to provide their children with enough affection and security, a child may seek ego satisfaction through undesirable channels.

#### Case 1

Thomas was a fourteen-year-old boy, the fourth of seven children, who appeared in Children's Court on a charge of stealing. His personality suffered severely from the extremely destructive conditions in which he had lived throughout his life. Both parents were inadequate, being alcoholics, and neglected all of their children. The entire pattern of the boy's emotional life was one of frustration and deprivation. As a consequence of these experiences, Thomas became a very passive, inadequate youngster with no confidence in himself and with very little strength in his personality. Also, the fact that he was a dull boy, a non-reader, resulting in failure in school, added further to this pattern of failure.

TABLE 3  
ORDINAL POSITION OF BOYS

Ordinal Position	Number of Boys
Total	29
Only Child	3
Oldest	7
Middle	15
Youngest	4

Table 3 reveals that over one-half of the boys fell into the middle child bracket. Of the remaining fourteen, three were the only child, seven were the oldest child, and four were the youngest child. Children

<sup>1</sup>Leo Kanner, Child Psychiatry (Springfield, 1946), p. 87

in the middle child bracket are thought to be more susceptible to the development of behavior difficulties than those who fall into the oldest, only and youngest positions, as those in the latter group usually receive preferential attention and recognition from the parental figures. It is significant that the delinquent child is most often intermediate in position in a family.<sup>1</sup> The child who does not receive the desired affection and recognition, may react in a hostile and aggressive manner toward his environment.

All of the boys in the study exhibited poor interfamilial relationships, which were apparent either in forms such as strong sibling rivalry or the inability to get along with the parental figures. A lack of cohesion was also evident in these cases.

#### Social Characteristics

One significant factor brought out in the study was the lack of affiliation with organized clubs and supervised recreational activities in the communities. Of the total number of boys, only five were affiliated with supervised leisure time groups in the community, while twenty-four did not belong to any groups that were organized. This reflects the lack of recreational outlets in the community and also may point to disinterest on the part of the parental figures in helping the boys to direct their leisure time in constructive channels. This number may also reflect the lack of support and guidance that the boys received in their homes, as children learn to accept social norms first through contacts with their families, and learn by imitating and identifying with the parental figures.

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<sup>1</sup>Maud A. Merrill, op. cit., p. 76.



The adjustment of the boys in school prior to admission was rated by the writer as good, fair and poor. Those rated as having made a good adjustment did not present any behavior difficulties in class and achieved satisfactory grades in their work. Boys rated as fair were those who presented minor difficulties in the school area, such as attention-getting mischievous acts, but were able to obtain satisfactory grades. Those boys who made poor adjustments were those who presented behavior difficulties in addition to making consistently low grades or were chronic truants.

Of the total number, five made good adjustments in school, seven made fair adjustments and seventeen were rated as poor. The fact that such an overwhelming number of boys made poor adjustments at school reflects a carry over of the boys' adjustment in the home. The child who has been unsuccessful in resolving his conflicts in the home due to the lack of aid from the parents, will more than likely encounter conflicts in his activities outside of the home. The following is an example of a boy who made a poor adjustment in school.

#### Case 2

Enrique, an undersized twelve-year-old Puerto Rican boy was the product of a broken home due to the separation of his parents, both currently living in an illicit relationship. He was living in the home of the father and step-mother. In school his restlessness, hyper-activity and attention-getting behavior created difficulties in every situation in which he was placed. These problems were probably the outgrowth of lack of stability in the home in which he lived. His inability to accept his step-mother, and also his language handicap contributed to his problem.

The intelligence level that a child is functioning on possesses meaningfulness in understanding the total person.

TABLE 4  
INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENTS OF BOYS ON ADMISSION

I. Q.	Number of Boys	Evaluation
Total	29	
50-69	1	Defective
70-79	6	Borderline
80-89	8	Dull Normal
90-109	14	Normal

Table 4 reveals that on the Wechsler-Bellevue Intelligence Scale, which was administered to each boy on admission, the range of functioning was from the normal level to the defective level. Of the twenty-nine tested, fourteen functioned within the normal range of intelligence, eight were in the dull normal range, six were on the borderline level and one was on the defective level. The fact that over one-half of the boys were functioning below the normal level may be due to severe retardation, emotional blocking or incapacity. A child who functions below the normal level of intelligence may encounter considerable difficulty in adjusting to the demands of his environment. Also, the individual may be so severely retarded that he may lose interest in school and resort to truancy. On the other hand, one who is emotionally blocked may be susceptible to unacceptable behavior because his functioning leaves him unaware that his acts are unacceptable by society. Then there is the individual who may be incapacitated, such as the feeble minded person, who may be subject to easy suggestibility and associates with those individuals who are accepting of him.

On any test of capacity, although a good score is a sign of capacity, a poor score does not necessarily indicate lack of capacity. This may be illustrated in the following case of one boy who functioned on the defective level of intelligence.

### Case 3

On the Wechsler-Bellevue Intelligence Scale, Thomas obtained an Intelligence Quotient of 67, which indicated that he was functioning on the defective level. It was strongly believed by the examiner that his potential was somewhat higher than this. The severity of his academic retardation, his poor cultural background, and his fear of failure, coupled with his inadequacy most probably depressed his score. He appeared to be a passive boy who tended to be evasive and somewhat depressive because of his failures and the wish to avoid unpleasant situations.

On admission to the Training School, all of the twenty-nine boys were examined physically to determine their state of health and also to ascertain, if possible, any physical defects that might have bearing on the boys' anti-social patterns. The greatest frequencies appeared in underweight, overweight, the need for dental care and for eye glasses. Ten boys in the group were underweight, eight were overweight, nineteen were in need of dental care and six needed glasses. None of the boys presented any major physical defects.

## CHAPTER III

### INSTITUTIONAL TREATMENT AND RELEASE

Maladaptive behavior is very costly and destructive in its effects both upon the individual and upon society. An individual has needs in accordance with his particular culture, and if there is a lack of satisfaction to these, he may react defensively and seek a substitute response to his needs. The delinquent child may express his needs through various anti-social acts, which may be interpreted as methods of striking back at the environment and the persons who created unsatisfying and frustrating experiences for him.

The boys in this study were committed to the Training School subsequent to court hearings which considered the boys' ability or inability to profit from a period of probation in the community. However, six of the boys in the study were on probation to the court at the time of their last offense which led to commitment. This was indicative of their unsuccessful adjustments in the community and the need for a period of treatment in a controlled environment. Many of the boys had made previous court appearances.

TABLE 5

#### NUMBER OF COURT APPEARANCES OF BOYS

Number of Appearances	Number of Boys
Total	<u>29</u>
One	11
Two	13
Three	4
Four	1

Table 5 reveals that together the boys made a total of fifty-three court appearances. Eleven boys were appearing for the first time, thirteen were in court twice, four were there three times, and only one had as many as four appearances. Included in the total number of court appearances were eight occurrences involving eight boys who were before the court due to neglect petitions filed against the parental figures, and not due to anti-social acts on the part of the boys.

The greatest frequency in court appearances made by boys were those who had been in court two times. It may be significant that such a large number of boys fell into the groups having two, three and four court appearances. Intensive follow-up studies have revealed that among juvenile delinquents as well as young adult offenders, repetition of anti-social behavior occurs in a high proportion of the cases.<sup>1</sup> Apparently, in this group the majority of boys move in a cycle; from the home to the court, to the institution, then to the home again, and this cycle may continue due to inadequate planning, supervision and lack of concern for the youthful offender. It would appear then that since such a large number of these youngsters were repetitious in their unacceptable behavior, that there may be some common factor in the delinquent's make-up. It has been stated that this fact carries with it a very simple yet very profound implication, namely, that the tendency toward delinquency and criminalism is deeply rooted.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, a long term of treatment would seem expedient for the delinquent boy.

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<sup>1</sup>Eleanor Glueck and Sheldon Glueck, Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency (Cambridge, 1951), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

### Length of Stay at The Training School

Periods of treatment at the Training School ranged from five months to thirty months. Of the twenty-nine boys, two were returned to the Training School from parole due to their inability to make successful adjustments on their return to the community.

TABLE 6  
NUMBER OF MONTHS SPENT AT THE TRAINING SCHOOL

Number of Months	Number of Boys
Total	<u>29</u>
3-6	2
6-12	10
12-24	16
24-36	1

Table 6 reveals that over one-half of the boys in the study spent between twelve and twenty-four months at the Training School. Ten were between six and twelve months, sixteen were there between twelve and twenty-four months, two were there between three and six months, and only one spent from twenty-four to thirty-six months at the institution.

In correlating the number of court appearances that each boy made in relation to the months spent at the institution, it was brought out in the study that the greatest frequencies occurred with those boys who made two court appearances and spent from twelve to twenty-four months at the Training School. Of the thirteen who appeared in court twice, seven spent between twelve and twenty-four months in the program and six were there from six to twelve months. Of those who made three appearances, three spent from twelve to twenty-four months at the Training School, and only

one spent over twenty-four months at the institution. Of those boys making one appearance, six spent from twelve to twenty-four months in the program, three were there from six to twelve months and two were there from three to six months. The only boy who had four court appearances spent from six to twelve months at the institution. Therefore, a boy's stay at the Training School is determined by an evaluation of his personality and of the factors that have played a causative part in the boy's delinquent behavior, including family background and early experiences. These factors are taken into consideration by the various committees that meet at intervals for the purpose of ascertaining the particular type of supervision an individual requires, the kind of class or work to which he will probably adjust, and determining the type of care, treatment and training most suited to the person's individual needs. These are the Case Conference and Review Committees which are made up of various staff members at the Training School.

#### Reason for Commitment

The boys in this study were in conflict with authority, and were charged with various offenses which were socially unacceptable by society.

Table 7 shows the various offenses that led to commitment of the twenty-nine boys to the Training School. Nine boys were charged with stealing which included the largest number of boys in any single group. One may distinguish several forms of theft in this group, which were larceny, burglary and robbery. Larceny is the theft of things easily accessible. Burglary involves stealing after breaking into a house, and robbery is the taking of property from another person by force or

intimidation.<sup>1</sup>

TABLE 7  
OFFENSES WITH WHICH BOYS WERE CHARGED

Offenses	Number of Boys
Total	29
Stealing	9
Larceny	1
Burglary	4
Robbery	4
Incorrigible	8
Running Away	5
From Home	2
From Institution	3
Sex Misconduct	3
Truancy	2
Attempt to Kill Father	1
Setting Fires	1

Stealing by the child may represent his desire to obtain a substitute object for the affection denied him by parental figures. Lawson G. Lowrey feels that the major causes of stealing among youngsters are as follows:

First, the satisfaction of an appetite or desire for possession, the powers of inhibition not being sufficient to restrain the act of gratification; second, the means of securing status in the group either by proving to be daring and competent in such acts or by using articles of money stolen as gifts to purchase the favor of the group, a type of stealing called "splurge" stealing that is probably the commonest type referred to clinics for study; and third, symbolic stealing, in which sexual symbolism is especially important.<sup>2</sup>

In order to understand why a child steals, it is necessary to analyze thoroughly his background as well as his personality.

<sup>1</sup>Leo Kanner, op. cit., p. 370

<sup>2</sup>Lawson G. Lowrey, op. cit., p. 370.



Eight boys were charged with being incorrigible in their homes which reflected the faulty handling and guidance during the formative years of each boy's life. Disobedience on the part of the child may come about in cases of parental inconsistency, dissension, excessive leniency, excessive sternness and unreasonable authority.<sup>1</sup>

Five boys studied were runaways; two from their homes and three from institutions. Children usually run away from home and from institutions for similar reasons. These may involve unsatisfying relationships which offer little in the way of meeting youngsters' needs. Disagreeable home conditions, as well as the lack of cohesion in the family may be attributing factors in a child's runaway escapades.

Truancy was manifested by two boys in the group; however, it was also a problem presented by six other youngsters who were admitted because of other offenses. Truancy suggests a defensive, aggressive act usually representing rebellion against authority and an attempt to escape unpleasant situations which may be intolerable to a child.

Educational retardation may also be a factor in the cause of truancy. A child may be incapable of grasping the work that is required in a particular grade, and due to feelings of inadequacy, he may resort to staying out of school. On the other hand, a child may be a truant who can easily grasp the work, but finds it boring. In many instances the child is not encouraged by the parents to attend school and consequently does not realize the value of going.

Of the three boys in the study charged with sex misbehavior, two were involved in incestuous relations with siblings, and one was charged with

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<sup>1</sup>Leo Kanner, op. cit., pp. 370-371.

making indecent propositions to unknown women by telephone. Although incestuous relations may be looked upon differently by groups with various standards of living, our culture in the main considers this behavior taboo. Such factors as siblings of both sexes sleeping together and also destructive parental influences may foster the act of incest.<sup>1</sup> Sexual interests among children may range from natural curiosity to anti-social sex acts which vary according to the type of educational guidance that is given on the subject.

One youngster was committed because of his involvement in several fire setting episodes. Pyromaniacs like to cause excitement by setting fires with little moral attitude toward the act.

Whatever the behavior that brings these people in conflict with the law, the fact is that their primitive childish impulses are expressed without restraint, without remorse, without much or any feeling for society. It is partly this absence of conflict that keeps these people from developing body symptoms as in the other neuroses. They seem to have little or no moral sense and a poor development on that part of the personality we call the superego or conscience.<sup>2</sup>

An attempt on the part of one boy to poison his father led to his commitment. The adolescent may react with strong hostility towards parents in protest against rigid and punitive handling.

The father, either from hate or because of his sadistic attitude, takes pleasure in depriving and frustrating the boy, teasing and ridiculing him, and then punishing him when the child, goaded beyond endurance, breaks forth in anger. Very quickly the boy learns to guard himself in all ways possible and to submit to his father without reprisal.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, a child's development may suffer because parental attitudes toward him are adverse, which reflects lack of cohesion in the family, and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 410.

<sup>2</sup>O. Spurgeon English and Gerald H. J. Pearson, Emotional Problems of Living (New York, 1945), p. 351.

<sup>3</sup>O. Spurgeon English and Gerald H. J. Pearson, Common Neuroses of Children and Adults (New York, 1937), p. 56.

also very little understanding of the child's needs.

### Treatment Categories of Boys at the Training School

Classification of cases at the Training School falls into five categories, although some cases may fall into several categories. These are the a-social type, the medical type, the personality group, the pseudo-social type and the situational type.

The first is the 'situational' group. Cases falling into this group are essentially normal. There is no great personality distortion or gross conflict. The boy is adjudged to be capable of normal, constructive responses to a normal, constructive environment. He may be a boy with a record of good social adjustment who during the trying period of puberty and adolescence becomes involved in anti-social behavior with a delinquent group. While the delinquency may be serious, it usually has a short duration.

The second group has been described as a 'personality' group. This group includes boys with deep-seated emotional problems as factors in delinquency. These problems have typically arisen in a family situation in which the child has been exposed to some crippling experience. Such boys are commonly not capable, unaided, of normal, constructive response to a normal, constructive environment.

The third group is the 'a-social' group. This group includes boys who appear to lack significant attachments or loyalties. Such a boy may come from a family in which he has been badly spoiled or pampered, where he has been accustomed to having his own way in all his contacts with other people, and the pattern has been established over a long period of years so that the boy has developed into an egocentric type of person who is not in conflict at all in regard to the means which he uses to attain his own ends. On the other hand, he may have been rejected from an early age. At any rate the delinquent's responses are the same whether the parents manifest one extreme or the other.

The fourth type is called 'pseudo-social'. This group includes boys whose attitudes and standards are those of the delinquent group and who have strong loyalties to other delinquents. This group differs from the 'a-social' group in that its members do have loyalties and do have guilt feelings over violations of standards. The problem lies in the fact that their standards are those of the delinquent group.

The fifth group, and this is the smallest one, may be called the 'medical' group. It is made up of children with emotional problems stemming from physical disabilities. The effect may be direct or indirect. The direct influences would be in the nature of involvement of the nervous system or indocrine glands affecting

behavior. The indirect influence would be the reaction of the boy to some physical disability.<sup>1</sup>

Of the twenty-nine boys studied, two were classified as the situational type, twenty-six were in the personality group, and one boy was in the pseudo-social category. In considering the categories, it should be recognized that such a classification encounters many difficulties due to the overlapping and combination of the many factors involved. None of the boys fell into the a-social category or the medical group. The fact that such a large number of boys fell into the personality group reflects the high incidence of lack of integration of the personality structures of the twenty-six boys.

#### Training School Adjustment

The type of adjustment that each boy made while at the Training School was rated by the writer on the basis of the reports from the Review Committees which evaluated the boy's progress and adjustment at intervals. In evaluating each boy's adjustment, the committees took into consideration how the boys got along in all phases of the program. Those rated as having made a good adjustment were able to accept treatment and had favorable prognoses. Those who made fair adjustments accepted treatment on a more or less superficial level and their prognoses appeared favorable. Those making poor adjustments were unable to adapt themselves in the program, presented a good deal of difficulty, and had unpromising prognoses.

Of the total number of boys in the study, twenty made good adjustments, seven made fair adjustments and two made poor adjustments.

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert D. Williams, "Factors in Casework with Delinquents Which Require Special Emphasis." (Address before the New York State Conference of Social Work, New York, October 1940), pp. 6-10 (Mimeographed.)

Ten of the boys had previously been committed to institutions for neglected and dependent children. Five had been in one institution and five had two placements in institutions before commitment to the Training School. Their adjustments in these institutions were reported as having been unsatisfactory.

#### Previous Foster Home Experiences and Adjustment

Of the total number of boys studied, ten had previous experiences in foster homes prior to commitment to the Training School.

TABLE 8

#### PREVIOUS FOSTER HOME PLACEMENTS OF BOYS

Number of Placements	Number of Boys
Total	<u>10</u>
One	1
Two	2
Three	3
Four	2
Five	1
Six	-
Seven	1

Table 8 shows that of the ten boys living in foster homes prior to admission, one had lived in seven placements, one boy had five previous placements, three boys were in three placements, two had lived in four foster homes, two had two placements and only one boy had one previous placement.

Because of the incompleteness of some case records, which did not give details regarding earlier placements and adjustments in foster homes of some boys, the writer used the last placements of the boys in evaluating their adjustments prior to admission. Of the ten boys in foster homes, two

in general made favorable adjustments. In one of these cases the foster mother was thought to be overprotective; however, since the boy had strong dependency needs, it was felt that he related very well and made a satisfactory adjustment in this home. In the other case the boy had lived in three placements. This boy got along well in each of these homes; however, he was replaced several times because of the death of the foster parents in one home and the foster parents moved to smaller, inadequate living quarters in the other.

In the eight cases where the boys did not make successful adjustments in their last placements, several reasons were given. In five of these cases the boys were incorrigible and presented problems such as staying away from home, defiance, uncooperativeness, fought with foster parents and stole from the home. In two cases the boys were unable to relate to the foster parents, and they were withdrawn, showed tension, fear and the inability to submit to the routine of the foster home. One boy was not able to adjust successfully in his last home because he could not relate to his peers and exhibited strong sibling rivalry.

#### Reason for Referral to Foster Home

During a boy's stay at the Training School, the home situation is explored by the social worker in the city in an attempt to initiate preparation with the boy's family for his eventual return to the community. Prior to releasing a boy, the Review Committee at the Training School considers and evaluates the home situation in regard to the boy's ability to adjust on his return to the community. In many instances the boy may not have living relatives or any other person sufficiently interested in him to offer him a home, or home conditions may be so destructive that it

would not be advisable to return him home. In such cases, foster home placement has to be arranged.

The twenty-nine boys in the study were referred for foster home care for various reasons. Ten of the boys who were formerly in foster homes were again referred for placement. In five of these cases there were no existing family ties, as the parents had deserted. In two cases the boys' homes were inadequate due to irresponsible parents in one home and illness in the other. In two cases the boys' parents were separated and rejected the boys, and in only one case both parents were deceased.

Four boys who were living in institutions prior to commitment were referred for foster home care because of their need for a setting which would offer more individualized care. Seven boys who formerly lived with relatives were placed because the homes were thought to be inadequate as a good deal of rejection was evident and there was a lack of proper supervision. The eight boys who had previously lived with one or both parents in their own homes, were placed due to the inadequacies on the part of parental figures, and to broken home situations which presented destructive influences that offered little in the way of constructive relationships.

## CHAPTER IV

### EVALUATION OF FACTORS IN FOSTER HOMES

Foster homes that are selected for the care of boys released from the New York State Training School for Boys are utilized for indefinite placements and for temporary accommodations. Prior to release from the Training School, the prospective foster home boy has the opportunity to make several visits to the home so that he and the foster parents can decide whether they want to try to live together for an indefinite period. The foster home may also be used on a temporary basis when some situation, for one reason or another, causes a boy a brief separation from his family and he has no suitable place to stay.

The boys were between the ages of thirteen and seventeen on release from the Training School. Twelve boys were sixteen years old, nine were fifteen years old, six were fourteen, one was thirteen and one was seventeen years old. In general, it is thought that foster homes work best for those children in a younger group; however, some children of all ages may be able to benefit from foster home care, as reflected by the adolescent boys in this group. The nature of the problem is thought to be as significant as the age of the child. It has been stated that foster parents working with problem and delinquent children are required to give more time and go to more trouble than in the case for children with less severe problems.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, indefinite placements in a foster home can be used as a therapeutic measure, but the home must be selected carefully to meet the needs of the individual child.

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert D. Williams, "Foster Homes for Juvenile Delinquents," Federal Probation, XIII (September 1949), 51.



### Some Criteria for Placement

The Training School attempts to place boys with families where they will be given not only good physical care, but where the foster parents have a liking for youth and real adaptability in handling them. The following city and state requirements are made known to families applying for children. These are some of the general measures taken that were established soon after the Training School began its placement program.

1. The application for children must be made by the woman, as it is felt that she will have the major responsibility in caring for the children.
2. The boy must sleep in a bedroom with an outside window (not opening as an air-shaft). He must have a bed to himself.
3. There must be in the home not over six children under 16, including the children of the household.
4. The premises must be kept in a clean and sanitary condition.
5. All members of the family must be in good health.
6. In homes where children under 16 are placed, the foster mother cannot be employed outside of the home. (This does not apply where boys are over 16).
7. The family must have a regular and adequate income. Families on Home Relief or W.P.A. are not accepted for foster parents of children under 16. (For boys over 16, a family having an adequate W.P.A. income is accepted.)
8. Children under 16 may not be placed in a home where there are any roomers or boarders. (This does not apply to homes where children over 16 years of age are placed.)

In placing a boy, a basic rate of a specific amount is paid per week. In addition, clothes are purchased by the Training School for the boy, and he is provided with a small weekly allowance for carfare and spending money. The foster parents are paid by check at the end of every month, or, if the family prefers, at the end of each half month.

Most of the boys placed will be between fourteen and sixteen years old. The boys will be helped to find jobs when they are older. When they are working, they will be expected to contribute to their own support.

Only one boy will be placed in a foster home at one time. Later, if the first boy adjusts well, a second boy can be sent to the same home. However, this should not be counted on.

Before placing a boy, the worker not only talks with the family, but also with the family minister, the family doctor and other references suggested by the family.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to being certified or licensed as a proper place to receive boys, the home will also be approved or disapproved in terms of the other positive features that are offered.

Of the total number of boys studied, twenty-six were placed in certified foster homes. The remaining three, who were not living in certified homes, were in homes with the permission of the Training School. One boy lived with a family, worked and supported himself; one boy lived with an aunt and worked, paying subsistence, and one boy was living with friends and was supported by the Department of Welfare.

#### Reasons for Wishing to Board Children

The foster parents gave various reasons on their applications for wishing to board children.

Table 9 shows the number of boys placed in each of the eleven foster homes, and the reasons that foster parents gave for wanting to board children. Two families were interested in child welfare, three wanted to share their home, two were fond of children, one enjoyed working with children, one wanted to be a mother to someone, one wanted to help a boy, and one wanted to give some child a home.

All of their reasons for wanting children reflected the desire to love or to be loved.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert L. Cooper, "Foster Homes For Warwick Boys" (Warwick, New York), (Mimeographed.)

TABLE 9  
NUMBER OF BOYS IN HOMES AND REASONS  
FOR WANTING CHILDREN

Reason for Wanting Children	Totals	Number of Boys			
		One	Two	Three	Four
Total	<u>11</u>	2	4	4	1
Wanted to Share Home	3	-	1	1	1
Interested in Child Welfare	2	1	-	1	-
Fond of Children	2	1	-	1	-
Enjoyed Working with Children	1	-	1	-	-
Wanted to be a Mother to Someone	1	-	1	-	-
Wanted to Help a Boy	1	-	1	-	-
Wanted to Give a Child a Home	1	-	-	1	-

Frequently children are to the foster parents the emblems of love. That foster parents are often searching for love or more love or a different kind of love is not disqualifying, but it is a significant clue to a richer understanding of them. The crux of the matter lies in the degree of normality and reasonableness of their live specifications.<sup>1</sup>

Many foster parents are not aware of the forces back of their request for a child. For the most part the social worker is interested in what the request for a child signifies to the foster parent. Understanding the incentives of foster parents implies an understanding of their behavior in particular and of human behavior in general.<sup>2</sup> Unhealthy motives of foster parents usually show signs of values which they wish to derive for themselves by having foster children.

<sup>1</sup>Dorothy Hutchinson, In Quest of Foster Parents (New York, 1943), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

In placement both the social worker and foster parent share together the realities of the process and see how these realities coincide with the applicant's needs, desires and requests.<sup>1</sup> In other words, efforts are directed toward discovering the needs of the child and finding the home that will service these needs.

Even though criteria or standards for foster homes of an ideal nature are set up, this does not mean that they are absolute. Generally, when thinking in terms of ideals, the emphasis is on the constant striving towards a standard of perfection that is rarely attained, but exists as a stimulus for the greatest possible attainment in selecting normal families.

In the quest for foster homes, the perfect families are no longer sought. Perfect families are an ideal, to be sure, but it is realized that the foster parents are people--human beings with anxieties and fears, conflicts and problems; hopes and ambitions; strengths and weaknesses of varying degrees the same as other individuals.<sup>2</sup>

The social worker's skill in homefinding is necessary in selecting normal families, especially in which the major basic gratifications have been met in the areas of love and achievement. "Normal foster parents" does not mean that they must have a certain degree of culture, education, wealth or that all foster parents should have children of their own. It does mean that they have made reasonably satisfactory adjustments to the everyday demands of life.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>Deborah S. Portnoy, "The Use of Case Work Skills in Home Finding," The Family, XX (February, 1940), 323.

<sup>3</sup>Dorothy Hutchinson, op. cit., p. 62.

According to Table 9, one, two, three or four boys were living in each of the eleven foster homes. The majority of the boys were placed in homes with two or more foster children. There were four homes caring for three boys each, four homes had two boys each, one had four boys and only two homes cared for one boy each. The fact that the majority of boys were in homes with two or three other youngsters may be attributed to the limited number of available foster homes as the need for adequate homes has always been great.

Finding adequate homes is not an easy task, since it is difficult to find people who are interested in taking care of adolescent boys and who at the same time have the qualifications to work with boys who, on the basis of unfortunate experiences of long standing, show considerable resistance against establishing wholesome and gratifying relationships with adults.<sup>1</sup>

#### Common Factors in Foster Homes

Of the eleven foster homes used, four of the foster families were Catholic and white, and seven were Negro and Protestant. All of the boys in the study were placed with their own racial groups. In five of the homes the father figures were absent. In four of these homes the fathers were deceased, and in one case the father was divorced from the foster mother. In these five homes the responsibility for caring for the youngsters was left entirely with the foster mother. In the six homes where both parents were present, the fathers were regularly employed, leaving the major responsibility of caring for the home with the mothers. Two of the foster fathers were employed as construction workers, one was a baker, one was a clerk, one a tailor and one a butcher.

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<sup>1</sup>Erwin Schepses, op. cit., p. 45.

Nine of the families were buying their homes or owned them, and only two were renting. The homes were located for the most part in quiet residential or suburban areas and in superior neighborhoods, which provided a pleasant atmosphere for wholesome living.

Of the eleven homes used for placements, children of foster parents resided in two of them. However, in four others the foster parents' children had reached adulthood and were no longer living in the home. In five of the homes, the foster parents had previous experience with boarding children and were willing to take on greater responsibilities with children with more severe problems.

In regard to the educational achievements of the foster parents, the grades completed by three foster fathers were known, and nine mothers' attainments were known. The grades completed of the foster mothers ranged from the seventh grade through college, and from junior high school through college for the fathers.

#### Personality Attributes of the Foster Parents

The personalities of the foster parents are important in the placement process. In the six homes with both parents present, the mothers were the dominant figures. It was gleaned from the foster home records that the foster fathers on the whole manifested attributes of being stable, firm in their ability to handle the boys, easy-going, permissive and outgoing. Of the foster mothers in these six homes, two were thought to be authoritative and tolerant, and four exhibited characteristics of permissiveness, flexibility, tolerance, warmth and sincerity.

In the five homes where only the foster mothers were present, it appeared that three mothers were tolerant, meticulous and domineering, one

was warm and outgoing, and one was permissive and flexible. In these homes without father figures it would appear that the boys placed may have been handicapped to some extent. As they were adolescents, they had strivings to identify with and pattern after an ego-ideal in the home. Through love of this ideal, the boy strives to mold and develop his ego in an endeavor to make it as like as possible to that of his ego-ideal.<sup>1</sup> Although the adolescent boy may not need the father figure in this stage of development as badly as he did in the earlier stages, there is still a great need at this stage.

The boy who is brought up in a fatherless home is deprived of the benefit of the father's knowledge of the world and of life. He can identify with his mother, but this identification is not very helpful to the boy. His mother has learned about life and the world only from the point of view of a female and because of her feminine needs and desires. Such a viewpoint is of little benefit to the male person, for ways of thinking and feeling are different from feminine ones and vice versa.<sup>2</sup>

It would appear that to place a boy in a home without a father figure would require a careful evaluation of the home and the boy's ability to adjust and profit in such a setting.

Boys placed in foster homes by the Training School either attend school or are expected to work. They are supervised by the social worker for at least two years following release and may be discharged from supervision as having made a successful adjustment in the community. They are encouraged to become self-supporting and to plan toward the future.

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<sup>1</sup>O. S. English and Gerald H. J. Pearson, Emotional Problems of Living, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study, the writer has explored the factors that were taken into consideration on the referral of twenty-nine boys on parole to foster home placements. In addition, some of the personal, familial, social and cultural characteristics were analyzed. This has shown the policy, practice and procedure of the foster home program at the New York State Training School for Boys. As a result of this study the following conclusions were derived.

1. Of the total number of boys referred for placement, eighteen were Negroes and eleven were white. Twenty boys were Protestants and nine were Catholics. Of the total number, over two-thirds fell into the middle teenage bracket, who, at the time of admission were struggling with the onset of adolescence, wherein they manifested frustrations that occur within this period of psycho-sexual development.
2. All of the boys in the study except one were products of broken homes. This was due to parental divorce, demise or separation. Poor interfamilial relationships were evident as well as the lack of cohesion in the home.
3. A strikingly large number of boys were not affiliated with any organized groups or clubs in the community, which handicapped them in developing wholesome social outlets.
4. Over one-half of the boys were functioning below the normal level of intelligence prior to admission and made poor school adjustments, as a whole. Physical negligence was evident in many cases as was indicated by the many physical defects present.



5. It was brought out that the greatest number of boys made two court appearances, and the majority of boys spent from twelve to twenty-four months at the Training School.

6. Stealing was the major cause for commitment for the boys, and the greatest number of boys fell into the Personality treatment category at the Training School.

7. At the Training School, twenty boys made good adjustments, reflecting their abilities to form relationships.

8. The twenty-nine boys were referred for placement following release from the Training School because of broken homes and due to destructive influences in the homes which involved rejection, inadequacies and illness.

9. The boys were older than general foster home placements deal with, and the homes were used for indefinite periods as well as for temporary accommodations.

10. Boys were placed with families of their own racial groups and in homes that attempted to meet the emotional needs as well as the physical ones.

11. Some of the boys worked and contributed to their own support, and others were maintained by the Training School. Those boys who did not work were expected to attend school.

12. The number of boys in each home varied, which may have been indicative of the limited number of homes available. However, the personality make-up of the foster parents offered some range with which to match those of the boys.

13. Of the ten boys who were in foster homes prior to admission, only two had made satisfactory adjustments.

The study suggested that the availability of more homes would apparently be beneficial in offering a wider selection of homes to choose from in meeting each boy's particular needs. There may be some question in regard to placing more than one or two boys in the same home. However, the boy's ability to adapt himself to such settings would naturally be considered by the placement agency. In considering this it might be brought out that a boy may be unable to compete with other youngsters in the home and can only make a favorable adjustment in a home where he is the only child to receive the foster parents' attention and affection.

It would appear that the boys placed in homes without substitute father figures would require considerable screening, as they would be handicapped to some extent without an adult male in the home with whom to identify. However, some boys may be able to live successfully in these homes according to what is required in meeting their needs and what the home offers.

It should be recognized that some youngsters cannot profit by placement in a foster home, no matter how good. This should of necessity be recognized and the youth should be given the type of care suited to his requirements. It goes without saying then that well trained social workers are required to work successfully with the foster parents and the youngsters placed. The skill of the social worker will greatly facilitate the developing of meaningful relationships among those involved in placement, and toward a successful adjustment for the boy.

For the most part, it appears that the foster home program attempts to bridge the gap, from previous community life to successful adjustment, for the boys placed, for indefinite periods until they can become self-supporting and stand alone. This enables them to develop sustaining

strengths with constructive encouragement and support from interested accepting adults who work with them.

## APPENDIX

Code Number _____	Community Location _____
Address _____	_____
Age _____	Birthdate _____
	Mo. Day Yr.
Ethnic Group _____	Place of Birth _____
Religion _____	

Parents or Guardians of Boy \_\_\_\_\_  
Address of Parents \_\_\_\_\_  
At Time of Admission Boy Lived with:  
(a) Both Parents \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) One Parent \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) Relative \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) Other \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status  
(a) Married \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) Single \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) Divorced \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) Separated \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Siblings in Family: Brothers \_\_\_\_\_ Sisters \_\_\_\_\_  
Ordinal Position \_\_\_\_\_ Familial Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Mother's Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
Religious Affiliation of Family \_\_\_\_\_  
Special Interests and Hobbies \_\_\_\_\_

School Boy Last Attended Prior to Admission \_\_\_\_\_  
 Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Adjustment: Good \_\_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Grade Parents Completed: Father \_\_\_\_\_ Mother \_\_\_\_\_  
 Psychometric Results \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Medical Status: Excellent \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Commitment \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of Court Appearances \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Commitments to Institutions \_\_\_\_\_  
 Personality Problems of Boy \_\_\_\_\_

Treatment Category of Boy at Training School \_\_\_\_\_  
 Training School Adjustment: Good \_\_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_

V. Reason for Referral to Foster Home

Previous Foster Home Experience \_\_\_\_\_  
 Previous Home Situation Destructive \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parents Destructive \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parents Deceased \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parents Deserted \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parents Incompetent \_\_\_\_\_  
 Others \_\_\_\_\_

VI. Evaluation of Common Factors in Foster Homes

Length of Time Foster Parents Have Been Married \_\_\_\_\_  
 Reason for Wanting Foster Children \_\_\_\_\_

The kind of Home it Seems to Be \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Children In the Family \_\_\_\_\_

Ages of Children in the Family \_\_\_\_\_

Ages of Foster Parents \_\_\_\_\_

Education of Foster Parents: Mother \_\_\_\_\_ Father \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Experience with Boarding Children \_\_\_\_\_

Personalities of Foster Parents:

Father \_\_\_\_\_

Mother \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation of Foster Parents \_\_\_\_\_

Religious Affiliation of Foster Family \_\_\_\_\_

Particular Needs of Foster Parents \_\_\_\_\_

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